

[6 December, 2006]

RAJYASABHA

(c) whether Government are going to impose ban on the export of cement; and

(d) if so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) to (d) Cement prices have increased between December, 2005 and April 2006 at varying rates across the country, but these have stabilized since May 2006. Cement is a decontrolled commodity and its prices are governed by economic factors, viz, input costs, demand and supply, distance from manufacturing place and local taxes, etc. Government had impressed upon the cement manufacturers the need to rationalise cement prices. Responding to it, the Cement Manufacturers' Association had given an undertaking to maximize production and dispatch of cement; ensure that the retailers did not indulge in profiteering; bring in fresh investment to create additional capacities; and supply cement on priority and at 5% discount on the ruling prices to the Central Government departments.

There is no proposal under consideration of the Government to do away with the import duty on cement or ban export of cement.

Proposals for SEZ

†1519. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of proposals for Special Economic Zones received so far by the Central Government as well as State Governments and the names of parties from whom such proposals have been received alongwith their action plans,

(b) the amount of FDI and capital investment proposed to be made; and

(c) the names of foreign as well as indigenous companies and also of

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

those which are run by NRIs out of the above?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) The information is being compiled and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Low-Level of Trade on Nathu-La Pass

1520. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a month after trading formally restarted across the Nathu-La Pass linking Sikkim and Tibet, Chinese authorities have expressed disappointment at the low levels of trade taking place;

(b) whether it is a fact that China's official news agency has blamed the Indian side, citing a series of restrictions that New Delhi has imposed on the number of items that are permitted to be traded; and

(c) if so, what are the major concerns of Government in the trade between India and China through Nathu-La Pass?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Media Report carried in the Chinese official media has expressed concern over low level of trade taking place through Nathu-La. The number items for import/export are decided through mutual consent and not unilaterally. As per the mutual agreement 15 items can be imported from China and 29 items can be exported to China. The matter of trading time, commodities scope and the daily trade volume for individual traders for border trade through Nathu-La was also raised by the Chinese side officially in the third session of the Joint Working Group on Trade held in Beijing on October 30-31, 2006. The trade at this Border Point has started after a long gap and it may take time to pick up. Restrictions on trading time and movement of people have been put taking into account the concern of national security in that area.